



*State of New Jersey*

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES**  
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
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[www.state.nj.us/health](http://www.state.nj.us/health)

CLIFTON R. LACY, M.D.  
*Commissioner*

To: Health Officers

From: Simi Octania-Pole, Ph.D.  
West Nile Virus Coordinator  
Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program

Date: April 6, 2004

Subject: Bird testing for WNV Surveillance and Supplemental Courier Service for  
WNV and Rabies samples

I would like to thank you all for your cooperation and support during the 2003 WNV season. Based on the feedback received during the year and through the survey we conducted in the fall of 2003, we have made some changes and modifications to both the online GIS application and our reporting protocols. The following are some reminders, changes and general information to enhance communication and reporting. There have also been some personnel changes and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the WNV staff and their primary responsibilities for WNV surveillance.

**Personnel**

Simi Octania-Pole, Ph.D. – WNV Coordinator.

Shereen Brynildsen, MS – Epidemiologist – Shereen will be in charge of WNV human surveillance.

Floyd Borden – Administrative Analyst – Please direct all your queries regarding the WNV/GIS online system to Floyd. He will also be responsible for scheduling training sessions and granting access to the online application.

Kim Bernini – Clerk Typist – all inquiries pertaining to bird report faxes, mosquito submittal sheets, copies of summaries, etc. should be directed to Kim.

**Crow Testing and Reporting**

The West Nile Virus Working Group met on February 20, 2004 and reviewed the statewide crow testing and surveillance protocol for the 2004 season. Based on their discussions and the feedback received through the survey we conducted in 2003, we have decided to concentrate on bird testing in the earlier part of the mosquito season.

We will start bird testing on **April 15, 2004** and end it on **August 15, 2004**. As in previous years, the 5 positive birds per municipality limit policy will remain in effect. However, crows from new areas within a large municipality with 5 positives may still be submitted for testing; please indicate on the Dead/Ill Bird Report/Lab Submission that the specimen is from a "New Area".

**Please note that Dead/Ill Bird Reports for birds not submitted for testing still need to be sent to DHSS via fax at 609-588-2546. These are reported as "sightings". Local health departments (LHDs) should also fax Dead/Ill Bird Reports to their local mosquito agencies. These data are crucial to enable prompt mosquito control and surveillance efforts on the local level, as dead crows are excellent early indicators of WNV. Bird reports will continue till October 31, 2004.**

### **Positive Bird Notifications**

As in previous years, we will continue to send email updates about WNV positive birds and mosquito pools twice a week. However, in the early part of the season, these updates will be sent only when positive birds and mosquito pools are reported.

### **Courier Service**

LHDs can avail the services of the regular NJDHSS courier for sending avian samples to PHEL. In addition, Rutgers University will be providing supplemental courier services at the stops listed in the attachment. This courier can also be used to send rabies samples for testing at PHEL. Please read the attached instructions for packaging rabies samples. **Please distribute the instructions to animal control, police, and other relevant agencies.** For the initial part of the season, please call Jennifer Gruener 732-932-9564 Monday to Friday, between 9 AM and 2 PM to schedule a pick up by the Rutgers courier.

Thanks again for your help and cooperation and I look forward to working with you in the upcoming months.

### **Contact information**

Phone – (609) 588-3121  
(609) 588-7537  
Fax - (609) 588-2546

### **Forms and protocols on the web**

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/enceph.htm>